

## Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02  
SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 DHA-02 MCT-01  
IO-13 COME-00 EB-08 TRSE-00 /084 R

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE  
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, AO, CG

SUBJECT: BORDER ATTACK ON ZAIRE - U.S. PRESS TREATMENT  
MARCH 25

1. FOLLOWING IS ROUNDUP OF U.S. PRESS REACTION TO INVASION  
OF ZAIRE.

2. MARCH 23 EVENING NEWS -- CBS WALTER CRONKITE:

SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE TOLD A SENATE COMMITTEE TODAY THAT  
NIGERIA IS WORKING ON A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE RECENT  
FIGHTING IN ZAIRE. HE ALSO SAID THE UNITED STATES IS  
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WORKING QUIETLY ON THE PROBLEM, AND HE'S ENCOURAGED BY THE  
PROGRESS. BUT IN ZAIRE THE FIGHTING CONTINUES UNABATED.  
THE MAIN TARGET OF THE REBELS FROM ANGOLA SEEMS TO BE THE  
COPPERMINING CENTER OF KOLWEZI, AND ALTHOUGH THEY'RE STILL  
SOME DISTANCE AWAY, COPPER PRICES ROSE TODAY ON THE LONDON  
MARKET.

KALB: TOP OFFICIALS ARE CONCERNED THAT A REBEL TAKEOVER OF THE KATANGAN MINES WOULD PROBABLY LEAD TO THE DISINTEGRATION OF ZAIRE. PRESIDENT MOBUTU WOULD BE FINISHED AS A NATIONAL LEADER, REPLACED BY LEFTIST POLITICIANS DEPENDENT UPON ANGOLAN, CUBAN AND SOVIET SUPPORT. THAT IS THE OFFI-

CIAL POLITICAL SCENARIO. THE ECONOMIC ONE IS NOT QUITE AS SOMBRE. IN RECENT YEARS THE UNITED STATES AND WESTERN EUROPE HAVE BEEN IMPORTING LESS AND LESS KATANGAN COPPER, WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR ONLY 9 PER CENT OF THE WORLD'S PRODUCTION IN ANY CASE. ALTERNATE SOURCES OF SUPPLY FROM ZAMBIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED IN ANTICIPATION OF JUST THIS KIND OF CRISIS.

3. MARCH 25 PRESS REACTION.

A. WASHINGTON POST:

-- UNDER THE HEADING, "ZAIRE ARMY REPORTEDLY IS COLLAPSING FAST BEFORE INVADERS", JIM HOAGLAND DESCRIBES THE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN ZAIRE GOVERNMENT REPORTS AND INDEPENDENT INTELLIGENCE SOURCES ON HOW THE GOVERNMENT IS MAKING OUT AGAINST THE INVADERS.

-- IN A SIMILAR VEIN, ROBIN WRIGHT DESCRIBES THE MINIMAL DEFENSES IN KOLWEZI.

-- A POST EDITORIAL APPLAUDS LETTING NIGERIA TAKE THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESOLVING THE CONFLICT IN ZAIRE. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IT CONCURS WITH THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT THAT THE U.S. HAS "NO OUTSTANDING COMMITMENTS" TO ZAIRE AND ASSUMES THAT THE PRESIDENT MERELY FORGOT TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND ENCOURAGE NIGERIA'S DIPLOMACY IN THE MATTER.

B. NEW YORK TIMES:

-- MICHAEL KAUFMAN REPORTS THAT WITH DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS UNDER WAY TO SOLVE THE CONFLICT IN SOUTHERN ZAIRE, BOTH SIDES IN THE FIGHTING ARE ISSUING CONFLICTING REPORTS OF MILITARY ADVANCES. IN BRUSSELS, THE NATIONAL FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF THE CONGO ANNOUNCED THAT ITS FORCES HAD CAPTURED THE TOWN OF MUTSHATSHA. A ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN DENIED THIS AND INSISTED THAT ZAIRE'S TROOPS WERE ADVANCING FROM MUTSHATSHA AGAINST TERRITORY SEIZED BY THE INVADERS. WESTERN REPORTERS EXPRESSED DOUBTS THAT ANY MAJOR GROUND MOVEMENTS HAD TAKEN PLACE IN OR AROUND MUTSHATSHA. THEY SAID ZAIRE TROOPS NOW NUMBERING ABOUT 1,000, WERE ENCAMPED NEAR THE RAILROAD STATION IN KOLWEZI.

-- IN HIS COMMENTARY ON THE PRESIDENT'S PRESS CONFERENCE, RESTON SAYS THAT THE PRESIDENT FAILED TO CLARIFY HIS DECISION TO INTERVENE IN ZAIRE. RESTON ASKS WHETHER THIS MEANS

THAT OUR POLICY IS NOW TO INTERVENE IN THE CIVIL WARS OF AFRICA IF WE HAVE A FRIEND IN POWER OR COMMERCIAL INTERESTS THERE?

C. THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR:

-- JOSEPH C. HARSCH WRITES THAT THE SOVIETS ARE CLEARLY EMBARKED ON A MAJOR OPERATION IN POWER POLITICS IN AFRICA. HE POINTS TO SELECTED RECENT HAPPENINGS TO SUPPORT THIS ARGUMENT. THE COMBINED CUBAN-SOVIET OFFENSIVE IN AFRICA HE SAYS, POSES FOR PRESIDENT CARTER HIS FIRST MAJOR CHALLENGE IN THE GREAT GAME OF WORLD POWER POLITICS.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
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